

How Much Is Too Much?

by Wayne Goff

Churches of Christ in America are slowly drifting off into apostasy and most are loathe to admit it! Preachers are not preaching on it. Members are not aware of it. A certain apathy has overtaken churches that once were stalwarts of the faith. Only the Lord knows **why** this is happening now, but I have an idea that it is connected with no longer enduring sound doctrine, **2 Timothy 4:3**. Let me explain, and you readers can consider the evidence and come up with your own conclusions.

Changes In Preaching

I have been preaching now for 48 years and during that entire time I have watched as brethren have *subtly turned away* from sound, convicted gospel preaching.

You can see it when brethren will travel across the state for a softball tournament but will not drive 30 miles to attend a gospel meeting.

You can see it when brethren shift uncomfortably in their pews when the preacher mentions (1) denominations; (2) false doctrine; (3) public debates; and other things considered as “negative preaching.”

You can see it as gospel meetings have slowly evolved into almost nothing – from two weeks to seven days, to six days, to five days, to four days (two of which are Sunday and Wednesday!). The argument for this is that we live in a modern time when so many things demand our time, energy, and attention. But the truth of the matter is brethren do not love the truth enough to study it, believe it, and attend to the preaching of it.

You can see it when brethren want to be accepted by their worldly friends and neighbors at school, work, and public meetings, and to do so they compromise their convictions or hide them altogether. Most of these things have been around for the last 50 years or more, so this is nothing new.

Newer Changes

Recently things have turned worse as churches have “canceled” Sunday night services for a myriad of excuses but not for any really justifiable reasons. Imagine elders **forbidding brethren** from assembling on Sunday night at 5 or 6 o’clock because they no longer have scheduled services then. Imagine elders “locking the doors” to prevent brethren from using the building at that time! Yet that is **exactly** what has happened in Kansas City at a local church near us.

The argument for doing so is that the Bible doesn’t require us to meet on Sunday evening, the habit of meeting then evolved from World War II and shift work, and therefore we are just promoting “human tradition” by having it! Then Covid-19 hit America and this drove everyone to stay at home. Now that the pandemic is nearly over, few have returned to services on Sunday nights, while I suspect the truth is that they really do not want to attend.

The arguments against canceling **any** worship service are several: (1) one less hour of gospel preaching is a hazard. Strong churches are created by strong preaching. When churches eliminate Sunday night, they are keeping their preachers from preaching much needed sermons; (2) brethren need to hear more sermons, more classes, not less! The first church in Jerusalem met “*steadfastly*” and were taught the “*apostles’ doctrine*” thoroughly (**Acts 2:42**). I see churches and brethren today who are spiritually weak and biblically ignorant – even when they attend four hours per week! (3) sports teams are increasing the number of their events due to **demand** and **money** while religion is taking a back seat; (4) the modern-day “**weekend**” is the time brethren use to get away from it all. While I am for “recreation” and I need much more of it, the supposed “week end” actually **encompasses** the “**week beginning**” (**Sunday, the first day of the week, the Lord’s day**) and Satan has subtly deceived us into thinking that this is ok! But brethren fail to see how much harm their ever-increasing absences are weakening the local church where they are members! (5) “Human tradition” has now become **no Sunday night service** in most churches of Christ, but nobody seems to complain about that! What are sound brethren to do when they **WANT** to attend more often?

Conclusion

So I wonder now as I near my own “retirement,” how much more apostasy brethren will accept before they finally stand up and say “enough is enough!” Or “we have gone too far!” Or “what has happened to us?” (And I haven’t even begun to discuss the numerous departures from “sound doctrine” that brethren have accepted!)

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